

# Indiana House of Representatives

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## News and Information

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### **BROWN WANTS VENDING INDUSTRY TO SUPPORT NUTRITIONAL CHOICES FOR STUDENTS**

INDIANAPOLIS - Responding to the announcement by the American Beverage Association that it now supports limiting availability of high-calorie soft drinks in school vending machines, Rep. Charlie Brown (D-Gary) today challenged Indiana's soft drink and vending industries to support similar limitations in Indiana schools.

Brown has authored and supported legislation to combat childhood obesity in past sessions of the Indiana General Assembly and said he plans to pursue such legislation again in 2006.

"I will be introducing legislation requiring that at least 50 percent of the beverage offerings in school vending machines represent healthy choices, including juices, water or other beverages that will contribute in a positive way to the nutritional options we offer school-age children," Brown said.

"This will be my fourth attempt to bring some common sense to the nutritional choices we give young people in Indiana schools," he added. "Now that the American Beverage Association has voiced its support for an effort of this type, I hope Indiana's beverage and vending industries will pay attention and follow suit. If they do, we will be giving Indiana's young people a healthier future and an improved quality of life."

The American Beverage Association guidelines actually focus upon three different sets of school vending policies. In the case of elementary schools, only water and 100 percent juice beverages will be offered; for middle schools, no full-calorie beverages will be offered until after school hours; and for high schools, no more than 50 percent of the vending selections will be soft drinks.

Brown said the guidelines are not perfect. One of his biggest criticisms is that the new guidelines fail to call for immediate action by not going into effect until existing vending machine contracts expire.

"This is a serious shortcoming because so many of these contracts last for five or even 10 years," Brown said. "If something is worth doing to improve the health of the next generation, it's worth doing immediately."

"If individual Indiana school districts are afraid to take this important step on their own, I want the Legislature and Governor Daniels to leave no doubt where we stand on the issue of childhood obesity," Brown added. "If we really care about kids and if we really want to cut down on the state's health care expenditures, we will immediately address the issue of childhood obesity."